1990

Late capitalism and industrial psychology : a Marxian critique

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Order Number 1340534

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San Jose State University, 1990

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LATE CAPITALISM AND INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY: A MARXIAN CRITIQUE

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

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May, 1990

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ABSTRACT

LATE CAPITALISM AND INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY:
A MARXIAN CRITIQUE

by Calvin James Newlan

In this thesis the development and function of industrial psychology is examined within a Marxian metatheoretical framework. It is argued that industrial psychology is an ideological artifact of late capitalism which enables the owners of the productive means to increase returns from purchased labor-time.

In addition, industrial psychology is viewed systemically as a dialectically-generated response to the development of a nascent working class consciousness brought about by the increasingly exploitive and alienating production relations characteristic of late capitalism.

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Preface

The field of industrial psychology has experienced a rapid growth in recent years, becoming an important adjunct to the tradional methods of managing the capitalist firm. In an age of increasingly competitive markets, both domestic and international, optimal productive efficiency is an essential element in the continued prosperity of the capitalist enterprise. Depending on the observer's perspective, however, the goal of maximizing the efficiency with which human labor is utilized in the production process can be viewed as either an advance in a natural process involving an ever more efficient, rational, and humane approach to the attainment of socially prescribed economic goals, or as an attempt by those who control the production process through their ownership of productive capital to objectify the worker, treating human labor as a mere commodity. The latter, Marxian, perspective will be adopted in this critique. It will be argued that industrial psychology is an ideological artifact of late (monopoly) capitalism which enables the owners of the production means to increase returns from purchased labor-time. Furthermore, the systemic aspect of the emergence of industrial psychology

will be analyzed as a dialectically-generated response to the development of a nascent class consciousness among the working class brought about by the increasingly exploitive and alienating production relations characteristic of late capitalism.

In order to avoid possible confusion concerning the style of Marxian analysis to be used, I am explicitly stating the assumption of the orthodox (dialectical) method of analysis, as contrasted to the so-called structuralist or instrumentalist models which tend to ignore the continual fluctuations in both the quantitative and qualitative nature of social structure and action.

Given the scope and complexity of this thesis, a rigorous methodology incorporating longitudinal studies and cross-cultural comparisons would be necessary for its empirical substantiation. This is a task made impossible in this work by obvious time and resource constraints. The reader is reminded that while Marxian theory is sometimes employed as an ideological tool, it remains a major paradigm in the field of sociology, and can be used heuristically (as in this work) to provide a fresh perspective on all manner of social phenomena.

CHAPTER 1

Historical Development of Industrial Psychology

With the onset of the industrial revolutions in Great Britain and the United States during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, respectively, the production process became increasingly specialized in nature. The artisan as master craftsman was being replaced by the unskilled laborer who could be trained with relative ease to perform the mostly simple and redundant work of the industrial factory or shop. This early deskilling of the production process introduced new opportunities for the exploitation of human labor as the increased control wielded by the owners of capital over the labor process enabled them to efficiently maximize returns on purchased labor-time.

Taylor and Scientific Management

A pioneer in the endeavor to streamline the production process and make the most efficient use of human labor was Frederick Taylor (1856 - 1915) whose research into the "scientific management" of the production process lay the groundwork for the modern factory system of production. Taylor began his research toward the end of the nineteenth century using as a working hypothesis for his studies the existence of a neoclassical-style relationship between the owners of capital and the workers in which both attempt to maximize the returns on their labor investment, the former

concerned with the maximization of profit, the latter with expending as little physical effort as possible for a given amount of pay (Viteles, 1933, p. 10).

Taylor's belief in the intellectual inferiority of the manual laborer led him to insist (1911, p. 58) that the best interests of the worker could only be served through the expertise of the scientific manager who could guard against unnecessary physical exertion by formulating the most efficient application of human labor to productive capital. At the same time, he believed the best interest of business would be served due to increases in worker productivity made possible through the scientific management of work. Taylor's vision of the social implications of the scientific study of work was utopian; he envisioned a world in which productivity could be vastly increased to the benefit of all. In addition, he believed his scientific management principles held the potential for "...the employers and the workmen who adopt it...the elimination of almost all causes for dispute and disagreement between them" (1911, pp. 142-143).

The influence of Taylor's scientific management principles on the development of industrial psychology was twofold: first, its scope as a psychological specialty was clarified by his micro-level economic observations; and second, Taylor helped to establish in the new field the primacy of the interests of capital owners over the secondary or tertiary interests of the working class (Viteles, 1933, p. 17).

Early Industrial Psychologists

Hugo Musterberg

The German psychologist Hugo Musterberg was the first professional in the field to construct directly applicable theories of worker adjustment to production processes. An outline of these theories appeared in his 1913 book, Psychology and Industrial Efficiency. A product of the prestigious Liepzig laboratory, Musterberg was an excellent researcher and methodologist, and expanded on Taylor's research in the field to include a wide variety of occupations. His research gave impetus to the growth of industrial psychology as a serious scientific endeavor in Europe (Viteles, 1933, p. 42).

Musterberg outlined early in the evolution of industrial psychology the goals to be worked toward and the interests that were to be served by the new field, stating unequivocally that the selection of those workers most beneficial to the capitalist enterprise, endeavoring to increase per-worker productive output, and the adjustment of the workers' behavior "in the interest of commerce and industry" were to be the primary aims of industrial psychology (Braverman, 1974, p. 143).

The question of the potentially unethical uses of industrial psychology was addressed by Musterberg when the field was still in its infancy. Matters involving industrial conflict, he insisted, did not fall within the range of the

industrial psychologist's concerns; he considered disputes over the efficacy of employing psychological techniques in order to increase worker productivity and, thus, profit as essentially political, not scientific (Baritz, 1960, p. 37). Ideally, then, the industrial psychologist, as Musterberg envisioned him, would be a perfectly disinterested third party to industrial class conflict, concerned solely with the efficiency of the production process.

During the First World War, Musterberg's research was applied toward the classification of personnel in the U.S. armed forces. Because of the scale of this undertaking, the young field of industrial psychology was quickly a topic of interest in academic circles as well as among large private sector business concerns (Viteles, 1933, pp. 43-4).

Walter Dill Scott

Industrial psychology was popularized in the United States in large part due to the efforts of Walter Dill Scott, a psychologist and professor at Northwestern University. An earlier career in advertising led to Scott's interest in the psychology of work. Although not as influential in the field as Musterberg, Scott pioneered the first treatise on the psychological principles of increasing the quantity and quality of labor output in his 1911 book, Influencing Men in Business. Scott eventually became the first chair of applied psychology at the Carnegie Institute of Technology where he continued his research and, like Musterberg, applied his findings in part toward maximizing labor efficiency in the

armed forces (Braverman, 1968, pp. 143-4).

The Hawthorne Studies

What Loren Baritz (1960, p. 77) has termed "the single most important social science research project ever conducted in industry" was performed in Chicago at the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne works during the years 1924 through 1933. Researchers from such prestigious bodies as the National Research Council, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Harvard Business School were involved with a series of methodologically rigorous experiments encompassing a wide range of variables thought to influence the efficiency of human labor. Because of the exhaustive nature of the Hawthorne experiments, and the considerable expenditure of time necessary for their completion, the results of these studies were regarded as an authoritative guide to the type of service to be performed by the industrial psychologist.

The early research in the psychology of work was limited in scope and relatively simple dealing mostly with the effect of fatigue on worker efficiency. Not until the Hawthorne studies was the scope of industrial psychology enlarged to include not only group processes, but purely psychological elements of work such as attitude and motivation (Meltzer, 1983, pp. 1023-4). Bramel and Friend (1981) believe those researchers involved in the Hawthorne experiments, and particularly the Elton Mayo research group, were instrumental in perpetuating an anti-worker, pro-capitalist theoretical framework for industrial psychology.

Offered as an example was Mayo's interpretation of the apparent tendency of workers to band together against the owners of capital as being "irrational" -- a problem he believed could be solved through "enlightened management" making use of the skills of the work specialist (p.868).

Developed Precepts of Industrial Psychology

By 1933, as Morris Viteles wrote his classic treatment of the subject, the scope of industrial psychology was set: industrial psychology was to serve the interests of the owners of productive capital. The interests of the worker were to be framed only in accordance with the requirements of the competitive market place. As defined by Viteles (1933) the purpose of industrial psychology is "...to acquire better understanding and control of these relationships: ...between the worker and his work,...between the worker and his immediate supervisor, ...between the worker and management, [and] ...between the worker and his fellow workers" (p. 55). Missing from this statement of purpose is an awareness, definition of, and commitment to the well-being of the worker which is either ignored or assumed to be automatically congruent with efficiency.

Modern industrial psychology can be defined (Schultz, 1978, p. 6) as "...the application of the methods, facts, and principles of psychology to people as work." Major areas of concentration within the field include the following:

(1) Personnel Selection: the selection of those prospective

employees most suited to meet the needs of the firm;

(2) Personnel Development: the maintenance or improvement of workers' attitudes toward work through psychological counseling;

(3) Engineering Psychology: the development of man-machine systems, e.g., ergonomics;

(4) Efficiency in Production: the control of physical and psychological factors in the work area;

(5) Supervision: the improvement of managerial skills (Schultz, 1978, p. 15).

The primary areas of concentration enumerated above are, without exception, oriented toward the needs of capital owners and their agent managers. According to Baritz (1960), "American management came to believe in the importance of understanding human behavior because it became convinced that this was one sure way of improving its main weapon in the struggle for power, the profit margin" (pp. 191-2).

Summary

From its very inception industrial psychology has been concerned with the manipulation of the human laborer in serving the needs of the owners of capital. This manipulation, which is both physical and psychological, was not codified into a psychological specialty in a vacuum. Rather, industrial psychology emerged from a definite set of historical conditions which characterize the maturation of capitalism. The historical conditions which revolutionized

capitalist industry also influenced the thought of the early advocates of the scientific management of work, and helped to shape the complexion of industrial psychology.

CHAPTER 2

Conflictual Perspectives: Neoclassical and Marxian

Industrial psychology has been influenced significantly by neoclassical economic theorists who view the field as a natural, and innocuous, response to the requisite market efficiency of modern free market capitalism. Marxism contrasts this perspective as it treats social structural variables such as class relations as integral to the analysis of institutionalized roles and the legitimacy they lend to programs of social control common in the late capitalist firm.

Neoclassical Economic Theory

In Western neoclassical microeconomic theory the process of production can be conceptualized (Reich and Devine, 1981, p. 27) as a "black box," i.e., as a simple process entailing inputs such as capital and labor, and outputs such as the commodity being produced, and, eventually, profit which accrues to the owners of the productive means. The production relations under capitalism are seen as representing a free and open exchange of labor for a mutually agreed upon wage. Both workers and capital owners are viewed as acting in a self-interested, utilitarian manner which is consistent with their greatest personal gain while not harmful to the interests of the other party. This "implicit contract" between the workers and their employers is viewed by

neoclassical economic theorists as reducing the likelihood for conflict between the two groups as both are aware that in order to maximize their respective gains cooperation must be stressed (Reich and Devine, 1981, p. 28).

The Marxian Interpretation

Marxism posits a quite different worker-capitalist relationship than the above in which the human aspect of purchased labor is ignored by the capitalist, whose sole concern is maximizing profit. From this perspective, the capitalist views the labor he purchases as simply another production variable the activity of which he is free to regiment in a machine-like manner in order to insure its most efficient use (Reich and Devine, 1981, p. 27). This depersonalization, or objectification, of human labor is made possible as the owners of the means of production are legally and economically empowered by a supporting state structure to determine the way in which the process of production will be administered. In a very real sense, then, the workers are controlled by the owners of the production means (Bowles, 1985, p. 19).

The Derivation of Surplus Value

Because the capitalist generally purchases a worker's labor-time (potential labor) as opposed to actual work, the effort is made to regulate the productive process in order to derive as much work (ultimately value) as possible from a given block of purchased labor-time. The end objective of the capitalist, from the Marxian perspective, is the accumulation

of capital through the derivation of net profit, or surplus value. Increases in returns of derived absolute surplus value, however, begin to diminish beyond a certain rate of production due to the biological and technical constraints of the human laborer. Thus the effort is often made to increase relative surplus value by devaluing labor, by limiting the diversity of tasks performed by any one worker (cf., Taylor), and through the exploitation of foreign resources (Zimbalist, 1975, p. 54).

Social Class and the Capitalist Firm

Because social class is an important factor at the micro-level, influencing the manner in which the process of production is organized, Marx's microeconomic theory cannot be derived from macro-level market behavior. Power differentials based upon ownership and non-ownership of private property and capital shape the "bargain" between workers and capitalists. The class structure in capitalist society renders the capitalist powerful and the worker relatively powerless. The relationship between worker and capitalist, thus, is not viewed as merely an abstracted rational deal between equal partners as posited by neoclassical economic theory (Bowles, 1985, p. 81).

Furthermore, Marxism rejects the notion that the authoritarian structure of the capitalist firm is simply the most efficient manner by which to go about the process of production. The complex organizations characteristic of the capitalist firm with managers superordinated to the workers

is not seen as adequately justified as simply economically exigent. Rather, the organization of the capitalist firm is seen (Reich and Devine, 1981) as a micro-representation of a class-structured society in which the worker is forced to forfeit much of the value he creates (pp. 27-8). From the Marxian perspective, the manner in which the production process is organized in the capitalist firm is indicative of the stage of capitalism in which the worker exists. The organization of the work place in late capitalist societies contains within it a microcosm of capitalist exploitation in which the worker's movement, and increasingly his thought, is controlled within a highly regimented, efficiency-oriented work environment (Lukacs, 1968, p. 90).[1]

Engendered within the micro-level class dynamic of the capitalist firm is an adversarial relationship between the workers and the owners of capital. Since workers, acting authentically, would rather apply their labor-time to personally fulfilling pursuits rather than the creation of surplus value, capitalist production relations are characterized by a continual struggle between the two opposed classes (Reich and Devine, 1981, pp. 27-8). Marx (1967) described this natural propensity for conflictual class relations in capitalist society as "[the] unavoidable antagonism between the exploiter and the living and labouring raw material he exploits" (p. 331).

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[1] Author's italics

The Exploited Worker

Economic relations as essentially social in nature are integral to Marx's Labor Theory of Value and his position concerning the exploitation of the working class. According to the Marxian perspective, exploitation can be said to exist when three necessary conditions are satisfied: (1) a person, or group, realizes a gain through the use of another person or group; (2) the person or group ostensibly being exploited realizes a loss, or the lack of an appropriate potential gain; and (3) the exploited individual or group would not agree to enter into the relationship, understanding its true nature, if not forced to by some pressing need (in this case, economic necessity). These three criteria comprise The Fundamental Marxian Theorem (FMT) which states that the relationship between capital owners and the workers they use is inherently exploitive (Hollander, 1982, p. 869). This view contradicts the neoclassical assumption of an "implicit contract" between the workers and the owners of capital with no real exploitation possible due to the "free" nature of the exchange.

According to the Marxian perspective, the worker in capitalist society is truly free only to the degree that he may be able to change the venue of his exploitation. As long as he remains in capitalist society, he has little choice but to become involved in an exploitive relationship with a capitalist employer. The relative freedom offered the worker by capitalist society normally involves his choosing from

among three economic lifestyles (Roemer, 1982): he may (1) choose to take part in an exploitive process of surplus value creation, (2) become the recipient of public aid (to the degree this is possible), and thus exist in a state of relative poverty, or (3) he may choose to withdraw from mainstream society altogether (p.96). Hence, the economic "freedom" offered by capitalist society is only meaningful if one accepts as a universe of lifestyle possibilities those choices made available by capitalist society. In reality, the workers in capitalist society are prevented, by virtue of a class-structured socioeconomic system, from gaining access to productive capital, and are left powerless to engage in truly free economic exchange.

Late Capitalism and Productive Efficiency

The forms of exploitation employed by modern capitalists vary from extending the hours of work required per day to adopting an increasingly structured and mechanized work environment within which surplus value is created. In every case, however, the capitalist attempts to use the labor-time he has purchased from the worker in such a way as to yield for himself the greatest eventual profit. The effective engineering of the worker and his work environment has been shown (Gintis, 1976) to increase the quantity and/or quality of production, while decreasing the cost of management and supervision. Other economic advantages to highly specific and limited work functions include less expensive training periods, and an increase in net production as a few simple

operations can be mastered quickly by the worker (p. 42).

Late Capitalism

In late capitalism, optimized productive efficiency becomes a primary source of profit. This is the case due to the basic difference in market competition which distinguishes late (monopoly) capitalism from its competitive predecessor. Under monopoly capitalism there no longer exist numerous small firms engaged in open and free competition. Rather, as capitalism has matured, the markets of most major industries have become centralized in the hands of a relatively few, large firms. The control of a major industry, e.g., automobile manufacturing, by a few entrenched firms makes one major competitive weapon, the price war, an extremely costly proposition for all concerned. Because large firms have the resources enabling them to endure protracted price wars, the industry as a whole could suffer if such an eventuality were realized. In order to avoid costly price wars, major industries effectively fix their prices at a level which maximizes market-wide returns. While antitrust legislation has eliminated the overt formation of trusts, no such obvious collusion is truly necessary as the firms involved monitor their rivals pricing with the intention of establishing a market equilibrium (profit maximization) price from which they all can benefit. According to Baran and Sweezy (1966):

> The crucial difference between the two [price competitive vs. monopoly capitalism] is well known and

> can be summed up in the proposition that under competitive capitalism the individual enterprise is a 'price taker,' while under monopoly capitalism the big corporation is a 'price maker' (p. 54).

The Efficiency Imperative

With market-wide pricing set at the profit maximization point, and price wars effectively eliminated as a viable competitive weapon, large firms emphasize production efficiency and cost cutting measures as a means of increasing profit. The lower a given firm's costs in a monopoly market, the more resources it has for advertising, and research and development, i.e., for those areas in which the firms involved continue to compete for market shares. This efficiency imperative explains what Baran and Sweezy (1966) view as "...the extraordinary advance of technology and labor productivity which characterizes the developed monopoly capitalist economy" (p. 71).

The Changing Face of Work

The progressive concentration of capital among the industrial giants of the capitalist world has resulted in an increase in the percentage of total manufacturing assets among the 200 largest manufacturing corporations of 13.3 percent between 1947 and 1968, from 47.1 percent to 60.4 percent (Goldman and VanHouton, 1977, pp. 113-5). This trend toward increased capital accumulation in advanced capitalist economies, along with the structural production-related changes mentioned above, has resulted in the increased proletarianization of the workers. For example, while the

class of wage and salaried workers as a percentage of the total work force in the United States has grown significantly from 1780 (20%) to the present (84%), the percentage of blue-collar workers has remained relatively constant since 1910 at approximately 37 percent of the total work force (Zimbalist, 1975, p. 52). White-collar workers, on the other hand, have grown from 25 percent of the total work force in 1910 to approximately 50 percent. But even within this segment of the work force labor has become increasingly routinized and impersonal as white-collar workers, more educated than ever before, are left powerless to work creatively or contribute to decision-making influencing the production process. White-collar occupations once clearly associated with the middle class professional have, with their more routinized and simplified work schedules, come to resemble the monotonous labor of the industrial production line (Zimbalist, 1975, pp. 52-3).

In what Baran and Sweezy (1966) refer to as "...an engine for maximizing profits and accumulating capital," the typical large corporation is afforded more time than in the past, due to the built-in stability of monopoly markets, to create strategies for the rational, highly quantified treatment of the production process and the control of labor (p. 47). In addition to this drive for optimal productive efficiency among large domestic corporations is increasing competition from other advanced capitalist countries (e.g., Japan and West Germany), and intensifying inter-class

conflict in once easily exploited second and third world countries in Asia and South America. Thus, the ever constricting nature of the capitalist world market adds additional impetus for the development of techniques which maximize output from already existing labor resources. This implies the increased exploitation of the worker in advanced capitalist society. For example, between 1972 and 1987, the real average weekly income of U.S. workers decreased by 15% while the average hours worked per week steadily increased. It can be concluded, therefore, that the level of exploitation is increasing (Krikorian, 1989, p. 86).

Industrial psychology is used as an additional means of out-pacing competitors both quantitatively and qualitatively. This charge, that industrial psychology serves only the interests of the economically empowered ruling class, is not a recent revelation. As early as the mid 1940s some social scientists, intrigued by the new field, concluded that contrary to the rhetoric of big business, industrial psychology is a one-sided application of social science and serves only the needs of capital owners (Whyte, 1987, p. 489). According to Baritz:

> Managers did not make use of social science out of a sense of social responsibility, but out of a recognized need to attack age-old problems of costs and worker loyalty with new weapons designed to fit the needs and problems of the twentieth century (1960, p. 196).[2]

[2] emphasis added

Summary

As capitalist production relations have matured, there has arisen the need, from the point of view of the owners of capital and their agents, management, to more efficiently derive surplus value from the workers' labor. The neoclassical economic theory used as a theoretical basis in analyzing the work process and the changing complexion of capitalism have combined to form an environment conducive to this goal which is both manipulative and exploitive.

CHAPTER 3

Industrial Psychology as Ideological Artifact

In order to adequately critique industrial psychology from a Marxian perspective, it must be placed in the context of Western scientific theory in general. It is the Marxian contention that Western science is in fact ideology, and fails in its manifest aim of providing a framework within which an objective understanding of naturalistic and social reality can occur.

Western Scientific Theory

The theoretical and methodological principles underlying all Western scientific endeavors are positivist and empiricist in nature. The term "positivism" describes the systematic framing of hypotheses in order that they may be verified or rejected through sense data alone. Consequently, the positivist perspective views metaphysical and transcendental modes of enquiry as largely meaningless. "Empiricism" describes the actual process whereby hypotheses are tested, and implies the measurement of sense data through the use of an exact meta-language such as mathematics (Marcuse, 1964, p. 172).

From the standpoint of the investigator, the Western scientific approach starts with general experience which results in the formulation of an initial hypothesis and predictions as to the future behavior of the observed

phenomena. The hypothesis is then tested empirically in order to determine its validity, or invalidity as the case may be. If the test fails to satisfy the conditions set for validation established for the empirical test the initial hypothesis is changed, or abandoned altogether. Thus, the Western scientific method progresses through a continuous switching back and fourth from induction to deduction (Davies, 1973, p. 5).

Positive philosophy, and thus Western scientific theory, denies the possibility of absolute knowledge. Instead of attempting to explain the ultimate cause of a given phenomenon, the attempt is made to explicate its attributes. Thus, according to the Western scientific scheme, reality is to be examined piecemeal through the systematic deconstruction of it parts, and not through the assumption of a grand unifying framework. It is precisely this unifying framework that Marxists insist must be utilized if we are to gain a complete, unbiased understanding of reality (Marcuse, 1964, p. 152).

The Marxian Dialectic

In contrast to the Western scientific method, Marxism provides a comprehensive model with which social reality can be revealed. Its philosophical basis is materialist, dialectical and historical, and thus anti-empiricist and anti-positivist (Levine, Sober and Wright, 1987, p. 67). Marxism posits a dynamic process of social change and development premised on the assumption that the structure of

a given society is the result of an evolutionary historical dialectic involving the self-generated interaction of antithetical socio-historical forces. These forces are believed to determine the configuration of a given social structure through the mediation of the prevailing production relations (Morgan, 1986, p. 258).

Dialectical materialism, as a unified theory of reality, has it roots in the philosophy of the ancient Greeks who artfully employed dialectics in order to derive truth through the opposition of contradictory ideas. The notion of uncovering truth through an understanding of inherent contradiction has remained of interest to philosophers ever since (Sabine and Thorson, 1973, pp. 572-573). The Marxian materialist dialectic differs from its idealist ancestry, however, in that the movement of <u>matter</u> alone is thought to be the basis for the structure and change in the physical and social world. This movement is thought to take place in accordance with the so-called "laws" of the dialectic commonly formulated as, (1) the Law of the Transformation of Quantity into Quality, (2) the Law of the Mutual Interdependence of Opposites, and (3) the Law of the Negation of the Negation. Examined respectively, these laws describe a theory of reality, or <u>ontology</u>, in which (a) quantitative changes in the motion of matter-energy bring about qualitative and emergent changes in its form; (b) all matter and material artifacts, e.g., ideas, are comprised of mutually contradictory elements; and (c) the movement of

these mutually contradictory elements results in their negation and formal evolution (Graham, 1987, pp. 48-53). Thus, dialectical materialism is a philosophical perspective which purports to explain not only naturalistic phenomena, but the movement of history itself.

In contrast to Western scientific theory, dialectical materialism claims not only the possibility of absolute knowledge but its necessity in the explication of social phenomena. Thus, the primary Marxian objection to Western scientific theory is its assumption of an ahistorical objectivity through which the researcher ostensibly arrives at an accurate interpretation of reality. Historically determined value-bias is viewed by Marxists as confounding this "objective" search at every stage of the process. The subject of research, theoretical framework in which it is to be analyzed, and interpretation of empirical findings are all viewed as contextual with the historical conditions in which the researcher exists (Habermas, 1970, p. 15). Accordingly, no truly objective understanding of natural, and especially social phenomena is thought possible unless the researcher is aware of the historical framework within which his thought is embedded. According to Habermas (1970):

> If we cannot simply derive a standard of evaluation from a positivistic concept,...then we cannot exclude the possibility that a methodological distinction could very well reflect a moment of truth in the philosophic, religious, or mythical traditions to which it can be historically traced (p. 24).

The dialectical view of social relations and change may appear quite alien to the Western observer due to its holistic, dynamic theoretical premises. In the absence of such a theoretical paradigm, however, it is the Marxian contention that social science, whether purely speculative or more vocationally oriented (e.g., industrial psychology), must necessarily reflect the interests of the ruling, capitalist, class.

Industrial Psychology as Epiphenomenon

It is the Marxian position that the Western scientific scheme is essentially ideological, a belief system which is a reflection, or epiphenomenon, of capitalist production relations. The impression of real objectivity in Western science, which is in fact a class interest, allows for the emergence of essentially ideologically based pseudo-sciences. Given that those areas of scientific inquiry deemed worthwhile in capitalist society merely reflect a mindset specific to the societal production relations, industrial psychology can be viewed (Kovel, 1980) as a natural ideological response to the drive for increasingly efficient, mechanized, and highly quantified labor activity (p. 75). The emergence of such ideological movements is indicative of the post-hoc analysis of phenomena which are essentially socio-historical in nature in order to rationalize and make more efficient the process of capital accumulation. According to Marx (1967), the methods used to examine social interaction typically "...take a course directly opposite to that of

their actual historical development" (p. 75). The formal ideological artifacts of the prevailing production relations are manifest in the institutional structure of capitalist society. The industrial psychologist, therefore, would naturally tend toward the bourgeois, neoclassical conception of human nature as the historical antecedents from which the late capitalist production relations emerged are ignored and ephemeral human attributes peculiar to this historical epoch are treated as concrete and eternal.

The Marxian Conception of Natural Man

The true essence of the human being, the species-being, was to Marx a potentiality latent in each of us. In the same way that Aristotle believed the potential essence of an acorn, when realized, is the fully developed oak tree, Marx viewed human beings as possessing the potential for the realization of a natural self -- a self unperverted by an exploitive production relationship and the configuration of consciousness it creates. As a process-philosophy, Marxism conceives of the fully "actualized" individual developing only in a non-exploitive, egalitarian social structure, i.e., one ideally suited to his complete, authentic growth as a human being. While human "nature" implies the existence of qualities present in all people and in all historical epochs, the concept of species-being implies the determined "nature" of man given his optimal development (Nord, 1974, p. 564).

Marx's view of natural man is based upon two primary assumptions. First, the human being is seen as capable of

understanding and acting upon material existence, and in this manner is able to influence the configuration of the material world as he absorbs it experientially. Second, human beings are viewed as inherently social creatures; the need for social intercourse is a part of our subjective essence. Thus, while individuals create social groupings such as the family, tribe or society, these social groupings in return create the individual. By acting upon and socially transforming nature, humans create their social selves.

Since we are, by nature, directed toward the transformation of the material world, we must have a framework within which this action is to occur. This framework of commonly perceived action potentialities is what we refer to as "reality." Social reality is a sub-set of this amalgam of action potentialities. Thus, through our participation within the totality of action potentialities meaningful to us collectively which we call "society," we continually structure our social world (Berger and Pullberg, 1965, p. 202). The medium through which this human productive action becomes manifest in a given society is its prevailing production relations. Social interaction is mediated by nature through a set of social variables; conversely, the transformation of nature is mediated by society through natural variables. We recognize these processes respectively as the forces of production and the productive social relations (Hunt, 1982, pp. 8-9).

It is the conceptualization of man as both social

creation, and creator, which sets the Marxian perspective apart from the Western, neoclassical conception of the production process and the worker's role within it. Given that individual consciousness is the product of the prevailing material relations of production, man cannot truly self-actualize, but merely assume his determined societal role-set as worker or capitalist.

Production Relations as Social Relations

From the Marxian perspective, the production relations cannot be separated from purely social relations since the production relations themselves are purely social. The perceived dualism of object and subject of production consequently results in a distorted sense of self among workers and capital owners alike as they continually re-create this artificial bifurcation of social reality through their existence within it. The process whereby this distorted conceptualization of the self, and the whole of society, becomes manifest is referred to as reification. The process of reification entails the conceptualization of abstractions as if they were concrete or material entities. In capitalist society, the production relations exist in the minds of most workers and capital owners alike as a concrete economic relationship set apart from other, social, relationships. The degree to which the individual in capitalist society treats his exploitive social relationship with a capital owner as a non-social, concrete fact of existence is one measure of the

degree to which his consciousness may be said to be reified (Lukacs, 1968, p. 83).

Reified consciousness naturally tends toward a conceptualization of society the structural characteristics of which in their immediacy appear to be primary and objective, while the social relations existing within the prevailing production relations tend to be viewed as secondary and subjective. Etiological reality, thus, is reversed in the immediate social awareness of reified consciousness (Lukacs, 1968, p. 154). Reified consciousness can also be called <u>false consciousness</u> since the actual process which creates the social world, and, thus, consciousness itself, exists outside of the workers' immediate awareness. The concepts of false consciousness and ideology were both important elements in Marx's epistemology, i.e., the manner in which the prevailing production relations determines the configuration of consciousness. False consciousness, in the Marxian sense, is properly used to describe a delusory or distorted impression of society, while ideology describes the various rationalizations for such impressions (Eyerman, 1981, p. 43).

The concept of reification can more easily be understood within the framework of the aforementioned dialectically driven process in which the individual is socially "created," and, conversely, helps in the creation <u>of</u> society. In every stage of the evolution of consciousness social objects appear as things "in themselves," concrete entities existing

independently of thought (Berger and Pullberg, 1965, pp. 197-8). Industrial psychology, itself an emergent attribute of late capitalism, exhibits this quality of apparent objective existence unrelated to antecedent historical causal factors. In this manner it assumes the appearance of an innocuous field of social science which grew out of man's desire to improve his social existence. Through his actions, the industrial psychologist continuously reifies his craft as an objective, "scientific" endeavor predicated on serving the interests of an idealized neoclassical-style production relationship.

The chief characteristics of the capitalist production relations themselves are superimposed upon the model of the human mind proposed by the industrial psychologist as people are viewed as essentially hedonistic, willing to exploit those around them in order to satisfy a perceived need. The neoclassical interpretation of the underlying nature of capitalist production relations as a non-exploitive necessary condition for the realization of industrial efficiency serves to rationalize this conception of human nature, and thus objectifies the worker as human capital, a "resource" that may be developed and shaped to fit the needs of expanding capital (Blackler and Brown, 1978, pp. 340-1). Gintis (1976) views the reification in neoclassical theory as "...follow[ing] the actual process of reification imposed by the capitalist mode of production -- the reduction of all social relationships to exchange relations" (p. 37). As

Berger and Pullberg (1965) state:

> Just as much as Marx will denounce the absorption of man into thought forms, so too he will denounce the alienation of man in an objectivistic scientism which explicates man by nature and thereby loses sight of the fact that, one, there is not a nature without human signification, and two, that science itself is a human product (p. 198).

Summary

Marxism views industrial psychology as an ideological artifact of late capitalism. Both its scientific underpinnings and its ready acceptance of a utilitarian, functional conception of human nature reflect the degree to which it supports the material conditions of the historical epoch in which it developed. Only in late capitalism could the production relations have matured to the point where nice distinctions concerning the specific type of manipulation most suited to a given worker can be treated as a "scientific" concern. And only in late capitalism could the necessary ideologies combine to form a composite artifact ideally suited to this purpose.

CHAPTER 4

Theoretical Foundations of Modern Industrial Psychology

Building upon the faulty premises of Western scientific theory and immersed in a framework structured by a neoclassical, functional interpretation of human behavior, industrial psychology has developed some assumptions of its own. These assumptions reflect a disregard for the social nature of the work process as well as a biased interpretation of the essential human needs of the worker.

Methodological Individualism

Among the premises integral to modern industrial psychology theory is the belief that the explication of social processes can ultimately be reduced to the level of the individual actor. Although the early, Hawthorne, studies often emphasized group processes as central to worker behavior, contemporary industrial psychology focuses almost exclusively on the individual actor. The methodological individualism of the industrial psychologist has been criticized (Cooper, 1983, p. 718) as failing to take into account the effect of such macro-level processes as institutionalized role expectations in shaping the character of human interaction. Sociologists generally consider this type of extrapolation, from the micro-level proclivities of the individual actor, to the macro-level social processes of the group to be logically fallacious since it fails to allow

for properties in human behavior which are emergent in nature, not reducible to the level of individual action.

In orthodox Marxian analysis, the reductionism inherent in methodological individualism is refuted by the Law of the Transformation of Quantity into Quality which emphasizes emergence as an integral property of change. In the case of formal work groups, the behavior of the whole cannot be said to be equivalent to the sum of the behavior of the individual actors. Rather, group behavior is seen as representing a new "species" of behavior with its own, unique, characteristics.

Methodological individualism, in the extreme, treats social institutions themselves (in this case the institutionalized production and class relations) as simply routinized individual behaviors legitimized psychologically through sheer repetition. In this extreme case, social phenomena are seen as the illusory representation of individual actors sharing "mental sets" of expectations and preferences, and thus only <u>appearing</u> to engage in emergent, social action (Sensat, 1988, p. 195). This model of human action is antithetical to that proposed by Marx which treats human action as historically determined, not fixed at the level of the individual actor (Nord, 1977, p. 77).

As a result of this fixation with surface, individual level analysis, it is common practice for industrial psychologists to blame the individual worker for behaviors incongruent with the goals of the firm. Worker performance deemed inappropriate or unsatisfactory by a given set of

work-related criteria is perceived to result from a "lack of fit" between individual psychological characteristics and the expectations of the firm which are assumed to reflect "normal" standards of comportment. The operant criterion defining normalcy in this case is the adequacy of the worker's ability to produce (Miner and Brewer, 1983, pp. 995-7). Only recently (since 1965) has work related complex organizational theory not associated with the scientific management school begun to gain a following, albeit small. This new theory takes into account the formal structure and technology of the organization and applies sociological theory as a basis for evaluation (Whyte, 1978, pp. 494-5).

The Problem of Worker Motivation

The notion that if a worker considers his work personally fulfilling, then he will tend to be more productive than a worker who is apathetic toward, or unhappy with, his work is a theme on which much of industrial psychology concerned with production enhancement is based. The rate of speed with which a given employee tends to work and the overall quality of his work have been shown (Maillet, 1984, p. 134) to be a function of the worker's motivation to successfully complete his assigned task. Not surprisingly, instilling within the worker the desire to meet or exceed the required quota was found to be an important variable in increasing productivity (Gallegos and Phelan, 1977, p. 284).

From the Marxian perspective, on the other hand, lack of worker motivation stems from the immersion of the worker into

an exploitive, alienating social setting (Farber, 1982, p. 30). Thus, lack of motivation may be viewed as a healthy response to an unhealthy situation.

The Creative Interpretation of Maslow's Need Hierarchy

Industrial psychologists of the so-called "humanistic" school believe that the process of producing can help the worker to "self-actualize" and build "positive mental health" (Nord, 1974, p. 561). These claims, of course, are premised on certain definite assumptions concerning what indeed is the normal, healthy state of the individual. Interestingly, these assumptions are congruent with the goals of the capitalist enterprise in that the worker is urged to partly define his self-worth by the quality and quantity of his productive output.

The creative interpretation of Maslow's "hierarchy of human needs" is largely responsible for perpetuating the neoclassical notion that both capital owner and worker ultimately benefit from their respective roles. The owners obviously benefit from the profit derived from the labor of the workers; the workers are thought to benefit from a sense of accomplishment and self fulfillment which they derive from the act of producing. Maslow's need hierarchy assumes the existence of five basic categories of needs: physical needs such as food, water, etc.; safety needs; belongingness and love needs; esteem needs, such as feelings of achievement and the approval of others; and, finally, the need for self-actualization, attainable only after the realization of the

lesser needs and which Maslow (1954) defined as "...the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming" (pp. 91-2).

Because of the vague quality of Maslow's conception of the "actualized" human being, it can be used to support a wide range of theoretical perspectives concerning what individuals need in order to lead purposeful, meaningful lives. According to the interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy used by industrial psychologists, the "actualized" worker would be the worker who is well integrated into the prevailing role-set which defines him as a worker, and to a large degree as a person in capitalist society. This is precisely the conceptualization of the needs of the worker in capitalist society hypothesized by Marx as emerging from Western scientific ideology, i.e., the needs of the worker are ultimately reduced to the needs of the firm.

Marx made a distinction between constant or "fixed" needs, which he viewed as corresponding to certain instinctual human drives, e.g., sex and hunger, and "relative" needs which correspond to a given definite set of socio-historical conditions (Fromm, 1961, p. 14). Thus, Marx would differ with the neoclassical, functional interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy after its basic, prepotent needs, viewing the higher needs as socio-historically relative, not fixed and universal.

Common Strategies of the Industrial Psychologist

The strategies employed by the industrial psychologist

to improve worker productivity commonly use Maslow's, or a Maslowian-like, model as a theoretical basis. While the strategies are numerous and vary in their specific attributes, they are generally in agreement concerning the importance of a high level of worker motivation as a prerequisite for improved productivity. The following theories comprise the major bodies of thought concerning motivation and productivity enhancement.

Content Theory

Content theory assumes the necessity for certain emotional and psychological needs being met in order for the worker to be satisfied with his work, i.e., ideally a job should contain those characteristics which satisfy the perceived need of the worker to fulfill himself emotionally and intellectually. These satisfaction characteristics involve various dimensions of work such as the actual task performed, pay, prospects for upward mobility within the firm, recognition, benefits, working conditions, supervision, etc.. This admixture of intrinsic and extrinsic work characteristics (or a closely related variant) is the typical scheme by which the industrial psychologist of the content school measures job satisfaction (Locke, 1983, p. 1302).

With the exception of Maslow's need hierarchy, the Herzberg two-factor (motivation-hygiene) theory of work motivation is the most influential content theory in the field (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). This theory posits relative job satisfaction as determined by factors intrinsic to the

work itself, the so-called "motivators," such as recognition, responsibility, achievement and personal growth, and "hygiene factors," which are extrinsic to the actual labor process and are believed to hinder motivation and, thus, work performance. These factors include stultifying supervisory practices, uncomfortable working conditions, remuneration deemed insufficient by the workers, etc.. Motivation-hygiene theory states that worker motivation will increase in accordance with the intrinsic "motivators" built into the production process. The manipulation of external, "hygiene" factors alone is not thought to be effective in increasing worker motivation (p. 251). Thus, the emphasis is placed on bolstering those intrinsic job characteristics which the worker is believed to find in some way "fulfilling," while preventing extraneous worker discontent by maintaining, or improving upon, the extrinsic, structural job characteristics (Katsell and Guzzo, 1983, p. 470).

Process Theory

In contrast to the content approach to worker motivation, the process approach views motivation as a process contingent upon immediate behavioral alternatives, i.e., the alternatives which present themselves to the worker at any given point in time and his ability to choose a behavior which is meaningful to him emotionally is thought to determine his relative level of motivation (Jacoby, 1983, p. 1046). Ideally, then, the latitude afforded the worker in his ability to choose from among behavioral alternatives will be

sufficient to maintain the desired level of motivation, and, thus, productivity. The more accepting a given worker is of the goals of the firm the more likely it is that the behavior choices offered him will be sufficient to maintain a high level of motivation.

A popular process theory, Leibenstein's so-called "X-Efficiency" theory, emphasizes what Leibenstein has termed the constraint concern: the degree to which the worker is willing to subordinate self-interest to the interests of the firm. In this model, voluntary compliance to the needs of the firm is believed to result in greater productivity than forced compliance; thus, the worker must be made to believe that the interests of the firm are either closely related to his own, or of superior importance. If this is not accomplished the worker is thought likely to indulge in what Leibenstein calls selective rationality, i.e., the worker will feel free to weigh the interests of the firm against his own, differing, interests. According to Leibenstein, "the lower the degree of constraint concern, the greater the extent to which the effort position will reflect self-interest, and the less it will reflect devotion to the firm's interests" (1978, p. 30). Here Leibenstein asserts the existence of an inverse relationship between the interests of the worker and those of the firm he serves. The interests of the firm and those of the worker as conflictual is taken for granted. Leibenstein functionalizes his theory as follows, U = F (E, P, DO). Where U is the worker's utility from effort

expended, P represents the worker's personality, and DO represents the demands of the organization. U is thought to be maximized given total devotion to the interests of the firm. According to this model, then, the key to production maximization is to fit the worker's perceived greatest utility to that mode of behavior most beneficial to the firm (Leibenstein, 1975, p. 592).

A Marxian Response to Strategies

It is clear that both the content and process theories of worker motivation ignore the larger social setting in which the production relations are legitimized. The content model is essentially concerned with identifying unproductive reactions to work environments which are believed peculiar to the psychological makeup of the individual, and modifying such environments when practical, i.e., inexpensive. There are obvious limits to the degree to which management will be willing to improve upon existing work conditions. Changes that entail a net decrease in productive output are not considered practical since this would contradict the manifest goal of the firm, i.e., the creation of surplus value and profit. In every case the interests of the firm are given priority over the needs of the workers. In addition, although the re-design of work can be an effective method of increasing worker motivation and, thus, productivity, this does not necessarily indicate that the worker has experienced an increase in real personal fulfillment or "actualization" (Friedlander, 1965, pp. 1-2). It is possible, indeed common,

for people to become integrated into role-sets from which they can be said to derive surface gratification and fulfillment, but which are ultimately damaging to their unique characteristics as individuals. For example, the "company man" may believe he is fulfilling himself through his work when in fact he is alienated from not only the reality of his exploitation as a value producing commodity, but from himself as a being possessing infinite creative potential. The operant distinction which must be drawn, then, is between those needs peculiar to the individual and those of a generic sort which are a product of a given role-set. The industrial psychologist draws no such distinction.

The process model, on the other hand, is almost entirely mentalistic, encouraging the direct manipulation of the worker's mind in order to achieve a better fit between the needs of the worker and those of the firm. This theory is closer to the Marxian conception of humans as object-directed and, acting authentically, fulfilling themselves creatively through the transformation of material existence. The universe of meaningful action potentialities in this case, however, is limited in scope to the goals and structure of the capitalist firm. Thus, the worker's options for meaningful creation are limited to action congruent with the creation of surplus value.

Clearly, Leibenstein's model objectifies the worker, reducing elements of his personality to the level of simple production variables which are then adjusted to fit the goals

of the organization in the same way that machinery is maintained in order for it to perform its function with the greatest possible efficiency. Lukacs (1968) views the submission of the individual to the goals of the organization as acting to strengthen the reified structure of the worker's consciousness. Not only is the worker called upon to exchange labor power for a portion of the value it creates, but he is further asked to forfeit whatever unique quality of his psyche may remain after his objectification as a surplus value producing commodity (p. 99). The worker is, thus, totally subsumed by, and subordinated to, the class structured social relations of the firm.

In both theories, the essential needs of the worker are overlooked as the assumption is made that a well integrated worker is a fulfilled worker. As Blackler and Brown (1978) point out, the complete inculcation by the worker of the goals of the firm is viewed by the industrial psychologist as a natural, healthy process:

> As people are encouraged to internalize their organization's objectives a naive pluralism is assumed and a kind of 1984 world begins to emerge, in which it is considered healthy (and adaptive indeed) for us to love our jobs and employing organizations and to be enthusiastic about our positions in society as they are defined by our work roles (p. 341).

Summary

The theoretical foundations of industrial psychology largely ignore emergent, social properties in human behavior

and concentrate instead on those perceived psychological factors which are believed to increase the individual worker's desire to produce. The process whereby workers are oriented toward the needs of the firm is sometimes rationalized as helping the workers to "fulfill" themselves. From the Marxian perspective, it is ironic that the worker, objectified and in the midst of an exploitive social relationship with the owners of capital can be said to be "self-actualizing." Any increases in the quantity and/or quality of production accruing from the manipulation of the worker's sensibilities is evidence only of the "actualization" of bourgeois capital accumulation and the further exploitation of the worker. Indeed, the worker is increasingly <u>alienated</u> from his authentic self as his prescribed socially reified work role is made more palatable for him through the efforts of the industrial psychologist.

CHAPTER 5

The Alienated Worker and Nascent Class Consciousness

In addition to facilitating productive efficiency, and thus serving the immediate interests of the owners of capital (a function served by all ideology), the emergence of industrial psychology in late capitalism is a response to the increasing alienation of the worker. Since it is necessary for the proletariat to understand the true (exploitive) nature of their relationship with the owners of capital before they can conceptualize themselves as a single class with common class interests, the role of the industrial psychologist in masking the alienating and objectifying nature of exploitive work retards the development of a nascent working class consciousness. By manipulating the workers' perception of capitalist production relations, the industrial psychologist is dampening the crucial ingredient to the formation of a true working class consciousness -- an awareness of the inherent contradictions of capitalism. This is not to say that the consciousness of the worker is directly controlled by the industrial psychologist, but rather the necessary conditions for the emergence of true consciousness are manipulated. Consciousness itself must always be considered a reflection of the prevailing production relations. Nor does this imply that the work of the industrial psychologist can indefinitely delay the

emergence of a true working class consciousness. As the capitalist production relations become ever more quantified, objectifying and exploitive, the stratagems of the industrial psychologist will become increasingly less effective.

The Alienated Worker

Marx viewed the process of work under exploitive capitalist production relations as a alienating activity for the worker. The creative aspect of human labor is largely absent from the heavily structured and specialized production process common to industrial capitalism. The opportunity to meaningfully create and the power to control this creative activity was believed by Marx to be essential elements in an authentic, healthy human existence. Exploitive labor diminishes the humanness of the worker by alienating him from his natural proclivity to create (Erikson, 1986, p. 2).

The Marxian interpretations of alienation views it as a phenomenon emanating directly from the production relations (infrastructure) in capitalist society. Twining (1980) enumerates four types of worker alienation: (1) from the process of work itself; (2) from the product of work; (3) from the worker himself (self-alienation); and (4) from the worker's fellow workers. Through his labor, the worker in capitalist society becomes objectified, his unique identity and natural qualities distorted becoming quantified and generic attributes of his class. That which is produced by the worker is not a product of his true creative potential; the worker merely helps to fashion, in machine-like manner,

part of the finished product. The whole of both the process and the finished product is unknown to him. In his role as a objectified worker whose labor power has become as much a commodity as that which he helps to produce. The worker loses touch with his true nature -- he becomes self-estranged. Finally, the worker is alienated from his species as his objectification as a commodity serving the requirements of the capitalist process pervert his relationship with others of his class (p. 418).

Marxism views alienation as social, not psychological, in origin, the by-product of existence in a highly quantified, objectifying social structure devoid of essentially human quality. While alienation may appear in many forms and along many axes of the individual's social makeup, most of its manifestations can be explained in terms of the social roles played by the individual. The degree to which the actor's role-set fails to satisfy immediate needs for psychic development will determine the degree to which he will feel alienated from those deficient aspects of his life, or from himself (Gintis, 1972, pp. 2-3).

In late capitalist society the structure of work roles is predicated on economic exigencies, and not on the essential needs of the human being. The depersonalization resulting from the heavily structured, efficiency-oriented policies intended to increase worker productivity damages the self. With the opportunity for natural, authentic personal growth obviated, the individual is left alienated not only

from the process of production, but from his true identity as a human being (Weldon, 1964: 470). Alienation, as manifest in late capitalism, is not limited to factory settings. White collar workers too are subjected to fragmented, heavily quantified work schedules entailing routinization and the separation of the self from the production process as information concerning the process in its entirety is withheld (Braverman, 1974, p. 340).

Scientific Management and Alienation

The similarities between the major aspects of Marx's conception of worker alienation and what Littler (1978, pp. 188-9) describes as the five primary characteristics of the scientific management of human labor are striking:

(1) "A general principal of maximum fragmentation." This principle prescribes the deconstruction of the production process to its simplest constituent parts in order to improve efficiency.

(2) "The divorce of planning and doing." This principle suggests that the planning and the execution of the production process should be kept separate.

(3) "The divorce of 'direct' and 'indirect' labor." This principle proscribes the preparation and organization of the work task by the worker.

(4) "Minimization of skill requirements and job-learning time." This principle is intended to reduce the time and expense of training workers to perform complex

tasks.

(5) "Reduction of material handling to a minimum." This principle suggests that the worker should spend as little time working directly with the raw commodity as possible; mechanized production should replace human labor whenever possible.

The five primary characteristics of scientific management described above satisfy the Marxian criteria for the emergence of alienation among those workers emersed in such structured environments. Alienation from the self, the labor process, the commodity, and from fellow workers is an explicit consequence of the heavily structured, efficiency-oriented organization of work characteristic of the late capitalist production process. Research in the area has indeed shown (Aiken and Hage, 1966, p. 498; Mottaz, 1981, p. 516) the existence of a positive correlation between highly structured work environments in which the worker (white and blue-collar) is afforded limited control over his work, and the incidence and degree of measured alienation.

While it is popularly believed that the scientific management techniques developed by Taylor have been superseded by other, more humane, techniques for managing capitalist industry, the evidence indicates that Taylorist techniques have been retained in the structuring of the production process, while new techniques have been developed to scientifically manage human capital. According to

Braverman (1974), "Taylorism dominates the world of production; the practitioners of 'human relations' and 'industrial psychology' are the maintenance crew for the human machinery" (p. 87).

Braverman (1974) points out the necessity in advanced capitalist societies for habituating the worker to labor in an atmosphere of quickly changing technology and inevitable conflict between "front line" workers and management. Furthermore, he views this habituation as an ongoing process which can never be fully completed due to the inherently antagonistic relations, exacerbated in late capitalism, which exist between the workers and the owners of capital (p. 139). The increasingly technical control of the human worker, a distinguishing characteristic of the late capitalist firm, is only possible if the worker can be made to accept these changes as aspects of progress. Again, the neoclassical notion of a non-zero-sum worker-capitalist relationship is operant as the increasingly exploitive nature of late capitalism further strains the reified structure of this antagonistic class relationship. In what Lukacs (1968, p. 165) terms "...the subject and object of the social process coexisting in a state of dialectical interaction," the subjective side of the process, the reified social relations are treated as objective by the industrial psychologist. In this way the legitimacy of the essentially ideological movement remains intact as it is perceived to be concerned with the application of science to objective phenomena

existing "out there," independent of human subjective conceptualization. Thus, the strained illusion of the capitalist production relations remains a reified "reality." Modulating the reified consciousness of the worker, and thus aiding in his continual habituation to the environment of the late capitalist firm, is the specialty of the industrial psychologist.

The Dynamics of Class Consciousness

The case can be made that whether manipulative or not, industrial psychology is an effective means of improving the quality of the worker's life (if only subjectively), and thus is doing no real harm to the worker. This sentiment is naive from a Marxian perspective as it fails to address the long-term interests of workers as a class.

Through history, as man's ability to control and transform nature increases so does his self-alienation. The more enamored humans become with the material objects resulting from the transformation of nature, the less attenuated we are to the possibility of existence outside of the structure of our immediate material relations. This dilemma, believed Marx, would correct itself with man's abolition of exploitive productive relationships and subsequent passage into socialism (Fromm, 1961, p. 43). Marx viewed the complete realization of the human potential as only possible when people are allowed full autonomy over their creative action. Work would become a pleasurable expression of creative potentialities as the species-beings

were allowed to develop. Alienation and social conflict would disappear in the truly free, egalitarian society, as would the role of the work specialist (Nord, 1974, p. 572). However, according to the laws of the Marxian dialectic, the contradictions inherent in a given social order must be fully developed and comprehended prior to its negation and formal evolution. Matured alienation among the proletariat under capitalist production relations is a necessary cause for the emergence of a nascent class consciousness and eventual social revolution. Any dampening of this alienation, or the awareness of it, as through the synthetic self-integration manufactured by the industrial psychologist, only serves to prolong the ultimate dehumanization of the working class. The notion that through the efforts of the industrial psychologist both the owners of the productive means and the proletariat can "win" is itself merely a reflection of the ideological complex of late capitalism, and an example of what Fromm (1961, p. 4) refers to as "man's unbounded capacity for negating blatant contradictions by rationalizations...." Addressing the ever increasing control of the proletarian's mental and emotional state in advanced capitalism, Marcuse comments:

> This is the pure form of servitude: to exist as an instrument, as a thing. And this mode of existence is not abrogated if the thing is animated and chooses its material and intellectual food, if it does not feel its being-a-thing, if it is a pretty, clean, mobile thing (1964, p. 33).

At one level of Marxian analysis, the self-alienation of the worker is regarded as a hindrance to the development of a true working class consciousness. In this sense, worker alienation is viewed as a necessary condition for the complete subordination of the needs of the worker to the requirements of capital. There is a point, however, at which the built-in contradictions of the capitalist production relations are revealed to the working class through the dialectical tension between the needs of expanding capital and the needs of the authentic self. Alienation can only act to distort self and class awareness when there are adequate superstructural alternatives for self integration. Through a process commonly known as "introjection," individuals transpose norms, roles, values, etc., from the outer social world to the self. In this manner, the needs of the self remain congruent with the requirements of society (Marcuse, 1964, p. 10). In the absence of a requisite variety of integrative alternatives, however, the worker is left drifting in a sea of existential despair in which reified consciousness begins to dissolve. According to Gintis (1972), "the very <u>appearance</u> of the concept of 'alienation' coincides with <u>the rise of industrial capitalism</u>, in the philosophical works of Hegel and Marx, and the literary works of Kafka and Doestoevsky" (p. 2).

As capitalism has evolved, assuming its present (late) form as a highly quantified, mechanically structured authoritarian social relationship leading to the ever

increasing alienation of the worker, there has emerged, in accordance with the Marxian epistemological dialectic, a qualitative transformation in the consciousness of the worker. This transformation of quantity (the increasingly quantified production relations) into quality (the emergence of a true working class consciousness) should afford the proletariat an awareness of the exploitive nature of capitalist production relations (Lukacs, 1968, p. 166). However, work specialists such as the industrial psychologist have interceded in a separate dialectical reaction to the emergence of nascent class consciousness. According to Braverman:

> As it presents itself to most of the sociologists and psychologists concerned with the study of work and workers, the problem is not that of the degradation of men and women, but the reactions, conscious and unconscious, to that degradation (1974, p. 141).

In this dialectically driven chain of events, the requirements of late capitalism can be viewed as a thesis, the increased personal alienation and consequent disruption of reified consciousness among the workers can be seen as the antithesis, and the ideological artifact industrial psychology is the synthesis, emerging from the contradictions of the needs of the natural self and the requirements of late capitalism, and thus assuming its characteristic function of mollifying the workers while feeding monopoly capitalism.

Summary

Those factors Marx believed essential for the development of a true class consciousness among the proletariat: the concentration of the workers, the standardization and mechanization of work, and a decrease in the absolute standard of living among the workers are precisely those factors which are of the greatest concern to the industrial psychologist. The proscription of individualistic thought, a melding of worker with machine, and merit systems involving non-monetary rewards are clearly intended to address aspects of the workers' lives Marx believed would ultimately result in the development of a working class consciousness.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion

In framing an analysis of industrial psychology within a Marxian theoretical perspective, two main objectives were accomplished. First, the critical nature of this approach adds balance to the often utopian vision of social engineering popular among contemporary social theorists. The assumptions and goals of those empowered to administer such programs must be carefully considered and not simply accepted as a sign of progress. Second, the use of the Marxian perspective as a heuristic device allows for a more comprehensive examination of Western society in general as taken-for-granted aspects of social life are analyzed from a vantage point largely misunderstood or ignored in the West.

The theoretical implications of the conclusions drawn in this work include the possibility of a critical re-examination of a wide range of business-related academic programs which borrow generously from the social sciences for their theoretical justification. As business becomes increasingly specialized and technical in nature, an ever larger percentage of business students will opt for careers as work specialists. This trend necessitates consideration as to the ethical and moral dimensions of fields which have a direct bearing on a major aspect of our lives.

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